

**Community Relations Committee  
Judicial Conference of Indiana**

**Minutes**  
March 23, 2007

The Community Relations Committee of the Judicial Conference of Indiana met at the Indiana Judicial Center on March 23, 2007.

1. **Members present.** The following members of the committee were present: Lorenzo Arredondo (chair), Robert Altice, Rosemary Higgins Burke, Deborah Domine, William Nelson, Susan Orth and John Sharpnack.
2. **Staff present.** Jenny Bauer provided the committee with staff assistance.
3. **Minutes approved.** The minutes from the October 2006 meeting were approved.
4. **Fire Brigade.** Judge Arredondo led a discussion of the media access issues that arose in the Myers trial last year. He introduced Judge Chris Burnham, the presiding judge for the Myers trial in Morgan County, and explained that he invited Judge Myers to attend the meeting to help with the discussion. Judge Arredondo gave a brief background on the issues by explaining that a reporter from Bloomington attended a Fire Brigade meeting in August 2006 at the invitation of the Hoosier State Press Association. The reporter wrote about the Fire Brigade's discussion six weeks later in an article critical of Judge Burnham's pre-trial rulings. As a result of the article, Judge Arredondo submitted a letter to the editor of the Bloomington paper explaining the work of the Fire Brigade and why the reporter's actions jeopardized its work. He also sent a letter of apology to Judge Burnham. Judge Arredondo told the committee that the newspaper did not publish his letter to the editor. Judge Burnham explained that the Myers trial generated intense media interest. He further explained that because the charges came out of a grand jury, many of the reporters did not understand that there were no charges or a probable cause affidavit in the case—only a transcript of the grand jury, whose proceedings are confidential. Judge Burnham said that having David Remondini available to help publish court rulings in the case was of great value. Mr. Remondini sent the rulings to reporters by e-mail. Judge Burnham stated that the lesson learned from this trial is that it helps to have a spokesman to speak on behalf of judges and help field requests from the media. He suggested having more information available for judges on dealing with the media.
5. **Report on National Center for Courts and Media workshop.** Jenny Bauer reported that the National Center for Courts and Media contacted her recently to report that they lost their grant funding and would not be doing the follow-up judge/journalist workshop in Indianapolis this year as planned.

6. **Cameras in the Courtroom pilot project.** Jenny Bauer distributed newspaper articles from Ft. Wayne, Evansville and Indianapolis regarding the Supreme Court's pilot project that allows cameras in eight courtrooms across Indiana. She explained that the articles were critical of the project and reported that the project is not working as expected. A media group has petitioned that Supreme Court to change the rules of the pilot project to give the judge discretion to allow cameras. Judge Altice reported that he would meet soon with Kevin Finch of Channel 8 to discuss ideas to make the pilot project work better. He explained that the rules of the project currently require a defendant to agree to cameras in the courtroom. Criminal defense lawyers are counseling their clients to not agree.
7. **Media exposure for courts.** Judge Arredondo reported to the committee that the Lake County Juvenile Court is getting national media exposure from an MTV series called "Juvies". Judge MaryBeth Bonaventura is featured in the series. Judge Arredondo also reported that Chief Justice Shepard taped a segment for Comcast cable that will broadcast statewide, that Marion County's judges tape a television show called "From the Bench" and the he taped a television segment for Comcast in northwest Indiana.
8. **Other business.** Judge Nelson reported that he plans to attend a National Judicial College training to learn how to teach a course for high school students on the perils of drinking and driving.

Respectfully submitted,

Jenny Bauer  
Staff Attorney